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tebral bone, Prof. Marsh's knowledge of the former term must be ascribed to some other source. The fact that the Amer. Journ. Sci. Arts appeared a good deal later than its usual date of publication, may be considered in this connection.—*E. D. Cope.*

FOSSORIAL REPTILES.—Prof. Cope has recently described some reptiles from the Permian formation in which the humeri possess many of the characters of those of the mole and other fossorial *Mammalia* in the great development of the muscular insertions and epicondyles, and the presence of a supracondylar foramen. They are referred to five species of three genera of *Pelycosauria*, a tribe of the order *Rhynchocephalia.*

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.

RICHTHOFEN'S CHINA.[1]—The portion of this great work relating to the loess, so wonderfully developed in parts of China, was noticed, at some length, by Prof. Whitney in the December number of this journal. We will merely run through the table of contents, to show the breadth of the researches made by the learned author, so well known in this country for his investigations in the geology of California. The general features of China and Central Asia, the loess formation in Northern China, the structure and formation of the salt steppes of Central Asia are discussed at length. This portion is followed by chapters on the transition region of Central Asia, on the distribution of desert and loess-covered regions in other parts of the earth; the plateaux of Central Asia, embracing the Tiën-shan, Kwen-lun and the mountainous regions in Southern Asia. The second part relates to the development of our geographical and historical knowledge of China. The wood-cuts are in many cases full-page illustrations and, with the maps and general elegance of the typography and paper, in addition to the text, render the work of a high order of interest.

THE BIG HORN CAÑON.—Gen. Brisbin has given an interesting account of the Powder river country, extending from the sources of the Big Horn and Powder rivers over the Big Horn mountains and the plains as far as the Missouri river, a country unknown to white men until 1866. "It contains," says Judge Daly in his recent address to the American Geographical Society, "one of the greatest natural curiosities of our continent, the Big Horn Cañon, which rivals the famous gorge of the Colorado."

THE ISTHMUS OF DARIEN.—A valuable map and notice of recent surveys, especially those of Lieut. L. N. B. Wyse in 1876 and '77, appears in the *Geographical Magazine* for April. Lieut. Wyse reports that a canal directly up the valleys of the Jupisa and Jiati is feasible, and recommends this route. He pays a just tribute to the work done by his predecessors, Commanders Selfridge and Lull, of the U. S. Navy. Farther explorations were carried on the past winter by Lieut. Wyse.

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[1] *China. Ergebnisse eigener Reisen, und darauf gegründeter Studien.* Von F. T. VON RICHTHOFEN. Eister Band. Einleitender Thiel. Mit 29 wood-cuts and 11 maps. Berlin. D. Reimer. 1877. 4to, pp. 758.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.—The *Geographical Magazine* for April contains a colored map, giving the proposed changes in the territorial boundary of European Turkey, as stated in Articles I, III and VI of the preliminary treaty of peace. Mr. J. Boyer has lately ascended Mount Ararat, which is 17,000 feet high. Large beds of snow extend down to a height of 11,000 or 12,000 feet. The last part of the ascent was upon a slope of rotten rock, which crumbled under foot, making the ascent very fatiguing. He found not a fragment of Noah's Ark.

MICROSCOPY.[1]

A NOVEL STAND.—A microscope stand, recently made for Dr. Blackham, of Dunkirk, by Mr. Tolles, of Boston, combines with the usual excellencies of that maker's work, some peculiarities designed to fit it especially for optical experiments. The stand is made on the Jackson model, and the slide behind the body, by which focal adjustment is made, is furnished with a scale and vernier by which the working focal distance of the objectives used can be measured with facility. Dr. Blackham claims this device as his own, though the claim has brought to light representations that the device has been previously used or suggested by Mr. Geo. E. Fell, of Buffalo. The most conspicuous peculiarity of the instrument is the method of mounting the mirror and sub-stage. Back of the stage and between it and the curved arm that supports the body, is a brass disc three-tenths of an inch thick and nearly five inches in diameter. This disc is arranged vertically between the body and the curved arm, with its center in the horizontal plane of the object. On the face of this plate, and near to its circumference, is a deep circular groove in which slides a radial arm which bears the sub-stage, mirror, etc. This gives, with great smoothness, the rotation of all the sub-stage apparatus around the object on the stage as a center. Though made last year, Mr. Tolles claims that this expedient was designed by him in 1871, thus anticipating the introduction of similar devices by other inventors during the last few years.

MICROSCOPICAL SOIRÉE.—The State Microscopical Society of Illinois held its annual soirée, by invitation, at the residence of Mr. E. W. Blatchford, at Chicago, on the 8th of March. This *conversazione* was one of the most notable scientific events that have ever occurred in the city. Though given in the name of the

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[1] This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.